

**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL BUDGET COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING**

May 18, 2009

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Project 2007005

Honolulu High Cost Transit Project

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Aloha City Council Members:

This statement is in strong opposition to any action that would allow the construction of elevated train infrastructure across the Honolulu Waterfront. Please do not allow this project to proceed with the present cumulative adverse visual and aesthetic impacts to the Honolulu Waterfront and its historic sites.

The Honolulu Waterfront is a significant historic complex destined to be blighted forever by the callous insensitivity and abandonment of sound planning and preservation practices demonstrated by the promoters of the proposed elevated rail transit project. Affected historic sites include Aloha Tower, Irwin Park, the Dillingham Transportation Building and the Maritime Passenger Terminal at Piers 10 and 11 – all listed on the Hawaii Register of Historic Places.

It would further compound this fatal mistake for Honolulu's future if the City forces intrusion of elevated transit blight on the Honolulu Waterfront's historic mauka-makai harbor views, including views from the Chinatown Historic District to Honolulu Harbor along Maunakea, Kekaulike, River, Nu'uuanu, Smith and Bethel Streets; Fort Street to Aloha Tower; and the Bishop Street mauka-makai view plane. As a consequence, the vital visual historic character and integrity of the waterfront centerpiece of Downtown Honolulu and its Harbor will be lost.

One only needs to consider the blight of the Embarcadero Freeway along the San Francisco Waterfront, and the universal public elation when it was torn down. It is time that the City and County of Honolulu learns by the mistakes of others and does not continue to blunder forward with callous insensitivity and abandonment of sound planning and preservation practices demonstrated by the promoters of the proposed elevated rail transit project.

The monolithic elevated train infrastructure and its overshadowing football-field size aerial stations planned to irretrievably alter and bisect the significant views and sense of historic place of the Honolulu Waterfront directly conflict with established policy documents, including the Oahu General Plan (Objective B, Policies 2 and 3; Objective E, Policies 4,5 and 9), the Primary Urban Center Development Plan (Objective 3.1.2 and Policy 3.1.2) and the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (Chapter 21, Article 9, Section 21-9.60), ruining the

waterfront experience for residents and visitors alike for generations to come in the following ways:

- Substantially visually changing and contextually impacting the entire Downtown
 - Honolulu Waterfront area, which is both a historic and scenic asset.
 - Positioning elevated infrastructure adjacent to and/or in the foreground of existing historic sites and views
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- Altering existing makai views and mauka view corridors
 - Introducing dominant features in the views, i.e., elevated infrastructure and expansive station elements
 - Substantially contrasting with the pedestrian scale and character of the streetscape
 - Substantially affecting the aesthetic setting of the historic sites

Further, there has been little, if any, consideration of the local context in this train proposal for Downtown Honolulu, or from Kaka'ako's historic Mother Waldron park to the gateway of Manoa's green valley, as it has been railroaded through an uninformed planning process. Hundreds of mature trees that have been protected and preserved for decades are destined to be destroyed or otherwise removed in direct conflict with the Oahu General Plan (Objective A, Policy 9) and the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (Chapter 41, Article 13).

This badly planned project cannot, and must not, be allowed to proceed further to overshadow and overpower these significant historic sites and destroy the visual character and integrity of the Downtown Honolulu Waterfront.

Michelle Spalding Matson